



Professional Certification Overview

Residency teachers can now earn Professional Certification by successfully completing a portfolio collection of evidence using the Washington ProTeach Portfolio guidelines. Washington ProTeach Portfolio is an assessment co-developed by Educational Testing Services and Washington State's Professional Education Standards Board.

Successful completion of the ProTeach Portfolio and coursework in “issues of abuse” will qualify Residency teachers for the second tier Professional teacher certificate. Residency teachers who completed a Washington State teacher preparation program after 1992 met the “issues of abuse” requirement through their teacher preparation program.

Western Washington University’s Professional Certificate support program provides assistance to candidates as they complete portfolio entries for submission and provides practice on actual ProTeach items. Each WWU module in the support program is aligned with entries in the Washington ProTeach Portfolio.

Frequently Asked Questions

1. How is the program organized?

Support is provided to candidates through a combination of three face-to-face seminars per academic quarter and web-based Blackboard assignments. To gain maximum benefit from the program – candidates must utilize both features.

2. Will I need access to a computer to participate?

Yes. Candidates should navigate to Western’s Blackboard web-site for instructions and hardware/software requirements. That website is found here: http://west.wvu.edu/atus/blackboard/st-Blackboard_basics.shtml.

Once you’ve registered for the program, you’ll need to establish a WWU Universal Account. You’ll need to activate your WWU Universal Account. The website where you get that started is here: <https://www.wvu.edu/empactivate/>.

Establishing a “universal account” will also allow access to a Western Washington University e-mail account. Official University information will be sent to candidates WWU e-mail addresses. Additional information about that process is included on the registration form.

3. What is the fee for support from Western?

Candidates who are new to the Professional Certification Program or who have completed only the Pre-Assessment Seminar or have completed the Core Seminar but have not completed a portfolio will begin with Module I and work through Module III. The total fee for the three required consecutive academic quarters of support is \$780. The \$780 may be paid in three quarterly installments of \$260 each.

If necessary, candidates may register for an additional single quarter of support for an additional \$260. It is anticipated that in most cases the program can be completed within three academic quarters.

Candidates who began the program prior to fall, 2009 and who have completed the Pre-Assessment Seminar and have a portfolio that has been reviewed and approved by a WWU instructor may register for the Culminating Seminar only as a two credit course at the usual Extended Education per credit rate.

4. What's the first step?

The first step is to complete an application to the program and an employment verification form. Those forms are found on Western's Professional Certification webpage at <http://www.wce.wvu.edu/Resources/Certification/Pro/>

5. When and how do I register?

Candidates may begin the program at the beginning of any academic quarter and registration information will be sent to candidates once they have notified us of intent to start. Contact ProCertInfo@wwu.edu or Mary.Hall@wwu.edu to start the process.

6. Where will the face-to-face seminars be held?

Seminars are generally held in school district facilities near where you teach. Your facilitator will communicate the meeting location, time and dates to you.

7. How many credits do I need to complete the program?

No credits are required in this program. The program is fee-based, similar to support programs provided to National Board Candidates. Optional University Continuing Education credit is available to candidates who choose to register for credit and pay an additional fee of \$50 per credit. If they choose to, candidates may register for 2 credits each enrolled academic quarter.

8. When is enrollment open?

Candidates may begin the program any academic quarter (excluding summer) and receive three academic quarters of support from that point forward. In other words, a candidate entering fall quarter will receive support through spring quarter, a candidate entering winter quarter will receive support winter, spring and fall quarters and a candidate entering spring quarter will receive support spring, fall and winter quarters.

9. What support is available to me?

Help is available in several formats.

- Face-to-face seminars are a required component of the program and candidates will receive personalized assistance from facilitators.
- Each computer-based Module (Blackboard) is structured to provide step-by-step instructions for candidates as evidence is developed.
- The Washington ProTeach Portfolio guidelines include rubrics that will be used by reviewers as they consider evidence. Understanding those rubrics before developing an entry will help you avoid irrelevant or insufficient information.
- Directions for Washington ProTeach Portfolio entries include guidelines for composing your written responses, entry steps, suggestions to help you make good evidence decisions, and templates for presenting evidence.

10. What if I already began working on Professional Certification in a credit-based program?

A candidate who has completed the Pre-Assessment Seminar in a credit-based program should register for three academic quarters of support at the \$780 rate. A candidate who has completed both the Pre-Assessment and Core Seminars and has an approved portfolio may register for the Culminating Seminar as a two credit course at the usual Extended Education per credit rate.

11. Am I required to use the Teacher Professional Certificate Portfolio of Evidence Assessment?

Yes, beginning fall quarter 2009 all WWU candidates are required to follow entry guidelines for the Washington ProTeach Portfolio as posted on the Professional Education Standards Board web-site at <http://www.pesb.wa.gov/> and in each WWU Black Board module.

12. I understand that the modules in the support program are aligned with the Entries required in the Washington ProTeach Portfolio. Should I work on them both at the same time?

Yes. The purpose of the alignment between the support program modules and the required portfolio entries is to assist you as you prepare responses for portfolio entries. Questions presented in the modules are designed to help you think about and prepare your responses for your portfolio.

13. Will I need to write Professional Growth Plans?

Yes. Professional Growth Plans are part of the evidence developed in Module I/Entry One and is included as evidence in the portfolio.

14. Will I need to complete each module in sequential order before moving to the next?

No, and it's important to review all of the modules before beginning. Module I contains reflective questions that cannot be adequately answered until work is underway on Modules II and III. This pattern is aligned with Entry One in the Washington ProTeach Portfolio.

Candidates first write Professional Growth Goals and then later reflect on the impact of the new learning on students. The reflective task in Module I/Entry One cannot be adequately completed until a sufficient amount of time has passed for the impact to be observed and analyzed.

The starting point is Module I but candidates need not finalize a module before beginning on another.

15. Will I need to consult with a Professional Growth Team?

Yes. The Professional Growth Team is made up of you and a group of three others who are familiar with your teaching role and can assist you in finalizing your learning goals. The members of the team consist of

- You,
- A colleague (selected by you),
- A school representative who knows district/school improvement plans, and
- A representative from your support program – your seminar instructor.

Professional Growth Team members will want to know your personal priorities for professional growth and will work with you to finalize them and identify resources to help you reach them in the timeline you develop.

16. Can I have my portfolio evidence reviewed by Western Washington University instructors?

For a period of time, your portfolio may be reviewed by Western instructors. Beginning January, 2010 you have the choice of either submitting your portfolio evidence to WWU instructors or to the state-level external review committee. That option ends after August 2011. After August 2011, all portfolios must be reviewed by the external committee.

17. Will there be a fee charged for portfolio review?

There is a fee of \$495 for portfolio review by the external committee. Review by WWU instructors will be available for a fee of \$50.

18. What is the content of the program?

- Pre-Assessment Module I – Professional Growth and Contributions. Aligned with Washington ProTeach Portfolio Entry #1.
- Module II – Building a Learning Community. Includes consideration of on-going professional growth starting with the end in mind. Aligned with Washington ProTeach Portfolio Entry #2
- Core Knowledge Module III – Curriculum, Instruction and Assessment. Aligned with Washington ProTeach Portfolio Entry #3.

19. I've heard that "Student Voice" is an essential component of portfolio evidence. What is student voice?

"Student voice" is the term used to describe students' understanding of their own engagement in the learning process. It's important to gather evidence of the student's experience in their own words.

20. I've heard that confidentiality is an important issue when presenting student evidence. What do I need to know about that?

Student work and a variety of school related evidence is a required component of portfolio evidence, but it's very important to protect the identity of everyone – students, colleagues, schools, and even your school district as you present evidence. This includes names and other descriptors that could result in identification. Do not identify yourself or colleagues and be sure to erase or black-out identifiers from student evidence artifacts.

21. Can I present visual evidence in the form of video, c.d., or other technologies?

Washington ProTeach Portfolio guidelines specify that entries must be submitted in written form only. Video or other adjunct evidence will not be considered by the review team.

22. Can I extend my Residency teacher certificate if it will expire before I will complete Professional Certification requirements?

Yes. Please contact the WWU certification officer at Dana.Edward@wwu.edu if you have questions on the Residency certificate extension options described through this webpage: <http://www.wce.wwu.edu/Resources/Certification/Pro/certextendoverview.shtml>

23. How do I apply for the Professional Certificate after I have successfully completed the ProTeach Portfolio?

You will be contacted by the WWU certification officer with application materials including information on coursework in "issues of abuse," which can also be found through this webpage: <http://www.wce.wwu.edu/Resources/Certification/Pro/procertapp.shtml>

24. What happens after I earn the Professional Certificate?

The Professional teacher certificate is valid for five years and can be renewed for five-year periods by completing 150 clock hours or equivalent college/university credits that address these criteria:

- Clock hours / coursework related to one of the five state salary criteria identified in RCW 28A.415.023
- Clock hours / coursework related to one of the three standards required for the Professional Certificate (Effective Teaching, Professional Development, or Professional Contributions)